

Annual Report

for Tenants

2022/23



Welcome to the 2022/23 Housing Services Annual Report to tenants. Here we share information about our performance in the last financial year.

This annual report covers the period between April 2022 and March 2023. Whilst we all try and return to a new normal after the Covid pandemic, things have not been easy for anyone - with the upturn in living costs having an impact for everyone.

The Housing Services team have continued to work hard to ensure that tenants' homes were safe and comfortable places to live and providing additional support for vulnerable households.

The report includes information about how we invest in homes, repair and improve them and respond to the issues and complaints that you raise. It will tell you how the rent that we collect is used to maintain and raise the quality of council homes in the District.

We hope you find this report informative and that it gives you a greater insight into the work that we do for the benefit of all our tenants and leaseholders.



Cllr Sue Thornley

Portfolio Holder for Housing



Nirmal Samrai

Head of Housing and Corporate Assets



Priorities 2022-23



Quality Homes: We will continue to improve the quality of the Council's housing stock for the benefit of our tenants by ensuring that we continue to meet and exceed the Decent Homes standard.



Support: We will make the best use of our stock, provide tenancy sustainment support, promote the provision of suitable accommodation, and provide information and advice to prevent and reduce homelessness.



New Homes: We will continue working towards delivering further new council homes over the coming years using the Housing Investment Fund. A site in Rugeley on the former Aelfgar school site is currently being progressed, working towards the submission of a full planning application and will deliver 58 homes comprising of 29 Council homes for rent and 29 for outright sale.

Key facts

(as at 1 April 2023)



We provide 5,045 homes across the District



We lease 296 flats across the District on leasehold terms;



We sold 30 properties through Right To Buy in 2022/23, and with no new Council homes delivered there was a net loss of 30 properties overall;



We spent approximately £6.7m on planned maintenance works and responsive repairs & maintenance to the existing housing stock in 2022/23 to ensure your properties are well maintained.

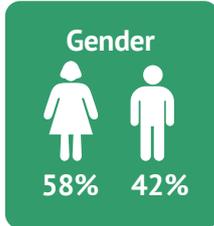


90% of respondents to our monthly repairs satisfaction survey said that were satisfied with the repair services we provided.

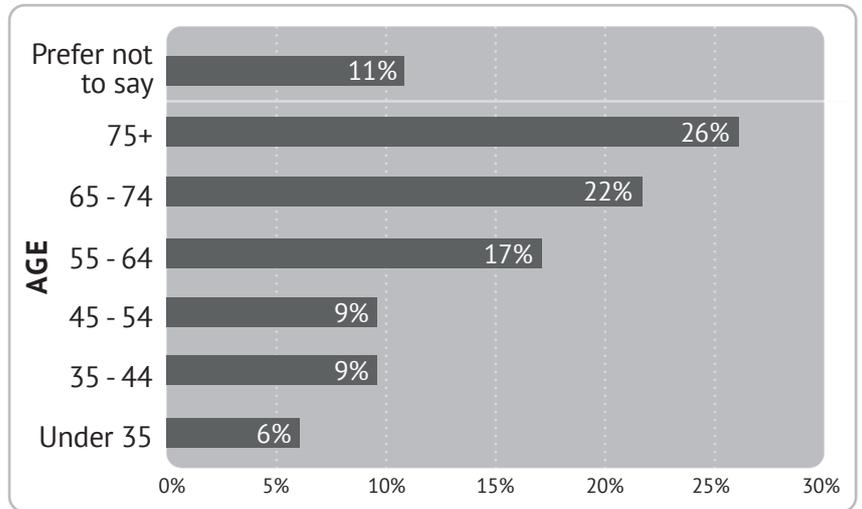
Understanding and responding to your needs

Tenant Profile (from STAR survey 2023, based on lead respondent/main tenant)

Our Tenants



Tenants have on average held their tenancies for **12.5 years** (slightly less than as last year). According to our records the longest tenancy held is an incredible **68 years!**



520 households requiring 1 bedroom accommodation

489 require 2 bedroom accommodation

228 require 3 bedroom accommodation

78 households require 4+ bedroom accommodation

2026 one bed properties;

1437 two bed properties

1465 three bed properties

60 four bed properties

1 five bed property

The Council has **5045 properties** for rent
As at 31/03/2023

Average time on housing register **16 Months** (increased since last year)

56 sheltered bedsits

We also manage **793 garages**, of which **377** were occupied. And we have **296 leasehold properties**.

(as at 31/03/2023)

During 2022/23 we received **33,122 calls** through the Contact Centre on Housing related matters and **469 visits** to the Council offices. This is an increase on last year for calls, but a slight decrease in physical visits - understandable perhaps as since the Covid pandemic customer interactions have shifted slightly away from face to face interaction towards other methods of communication - calls, emails, text messaging, social media etc. However we understand that some customers still want face to face interaction and we are working on improving our service offer to you.



Complaints and Compliments

244 complaints and enquiries

- 5 Stage 2 complaints ;
- 30 Stage 1 complaints;
- 133 MP enquiries;
- 76 were recorded as informal (i.e. councillor complaint on behalf of tenant, anonymous or from another family member)

30 complaints reached Stage 1

- 6 - Housing Options/Homelessness;
- 5 - Neighbourhoods;
- 4 - Repairs;
- 4 - Housing Property Services (HPS);
- 3 - Repairs and HPS;
- 2 - Income Management;
- 1 - Allocations;
- 1 - Sheltered Housing;
- 1 - Neighbourhoods and Allocations;
- 1 - Income Man. and Allocations;
- 1 - Housing Opts/Homelessness and Allocations;
- 1 - Neighbourhoods and HPS.

5 complaints were escalated to Stage 2

- 2 - Repairs;
- 1 - Allocations;
- 1 - Allocations and Neighbourhoods;
- 1 - Income Management and Neighbourhoods.



Two cases were considered by the **Housing Ombudsman** one which was not taken on as it was outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction and another case was upheld where a service failure was identified.



Measures had been put in place last year to rectify this issue, where an anti-social behaviour report was not properly corroborated.

15 Stage 1 complaints were upheld (fully or partially) = 50%

Four Stage 2 complaints were upheld (fully or partially) = 67%

This is a big increase on last year in all categories. Stage 1 complaints increased by 131% (from 13 up to 30) and stage 2 complaints increased 400% (one up to five). There was an increase in MP enquiries (up 14%), and informal complaints (up 90%) on the previous year too.

There were more cross-team complaints so we are looking to improve communication between teams by encouraging staff to visit other offices, pick up the phones instead of email, collaborate on processes, take ownership and train staff on communication.



63% of Stage 1 complaints were responded to within 10 working days.

60% of Stage 2 complaints were responded to within 20 working days.



Where complaints fell outside of the response times, complainants were informed that the deadline would not be met and told of the date they could expect their response.



What we learned from the complaints received and what we did:



🔍 What happened: A complaint was received about our gas contractor failing to get a tenants boiler repaired in a timely fashion. The boiler was new and the contractor was aware of a fault on a small number of this boiler type. The contractor failed to follow the correct process and contact the boiler manufacturer from the outset, instead they tried unsuccessfully on several occasions to fix the boiler themselves. This led to the tenant having a boiler that worked intermittently which caused a great deal of inconvenience and stress.

✅ What we did: The contractor accepted that they failed to manage the situation as they should have carried out a toolbox talk with staff and operatives to remind them of the process for dealing with a breakdown on a new boiler. The contractor will be investigating if they can develop their IT system so that it identifies properties that have had multiple repairs raised in short succession and flags it up. The Housing Property Services team at the Council also instigated reports to flag up properties that have multiple repair visits in short succession and we will raise with the contractor if they haven't already identified. As both systems now report in this fashion, situations like this will hopefully no longer occur.

🔍 What happened: A tenant complained that they had an outstanding number of repairs affecting their health and that they had difficulty in contacting Housing Maintenance to gain clarity on when these would be completed. After investigating it was apparent that the Housing Maintenance team had tried to complete the repairs but there were access issues when attended but then nobody had followed up to have these repairs completed. Also, some of the issues raised weren't the responsibility of the Council but this hadn't been explained clearly.

✅ What we did: The Housing Maintenance Manager attended the tenant's property and advised clearly of what we would do. Ownership and responsibility have been a theme of the employee reviews this year in Housing Maintenance and this was a classic case of there being no real ownership or responsibility from anyone who attended the property in ensuring the works had been completed. Through the employee reviews and team meetings we have discussed the need for all members of the team to own a job when it is given to them to ensure completion so we can be confident that this type of complaint should reduce in the future.

🔍 What happened: An issue arose when a tenant requested a recording of a conversation they had had with a member of the housing team. Unfortunately direct calls to staff members are not recorded, only calls answered by the Contact Centre are recorded. The message customers hear when calling into the Council main number was misleading saying that calls are recorded.

✅ What we did: The Council requested Netcall (the system provider) change the data protection message on the main telephone number to clarify that only calls answered by the Contact Centre are recorded, this will hopefully clarify the matter for customers. However not all calls are routed through the Netcall system i.e. direct calls to officers. No further queries relating to this have been raised since.

As well as complaints, we also record compliments from tenants

Mrs B said:

“ Sharon from Allocations was absolutely brilliant and very helpful. Please do pass on my thanks to the Allocations team and Sharon in particular for their hard work. ”

Mr and Mrs G said:

“ We had the final inspection of our completed wet room yesterday, what a fantastic transformation. For us it has been a life changing experience, and very comforting, we feel very safe now. It has been superbly carried out by your contractors. We thank you and thank Mark and his team for their work and help. ”

Mrs L said:

“ I would like to make you aware of how fantastic my housing officer has been, I cannot thank her enough. She has gone above and beyond to help us find a new suitable home, Joanne has been so supportive and understanding, I feel like she went above and beyond. ”

Mr F said:

“ Thanks to Tony and Charlie, the electricians who came in today. Couldn't be happier with their friendliness, professionalism and attention to detail ”

Mr P said:

“ Just a small note of thanks to all your team for this superb bungalow, we as a family are now all moved in and it's like we have never lived anywhere else. And as for me, everything being on one level has been like a liberation. I no longer have to use the Leisure centre for a shower. I understand it's only a job to you guys but getting this bungalow is the start of a normal home life. ”

Scheme changes improve access to Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman is focused on helping to resolve individual complaints made by tenants, shared owners and leaseholders about their landlords. They can consider complaints and disputes and may help mediate to find a resolution.

The Regulator of Social Housing is focused on ensuring that the landlord meets the standards set for social housing providers. This includes that the landlord is well-managed and financially viable, provides tenants with quality accommodation, choice and protection, and that its tenants can hold their landlords to account.

Information on our complaints procedure can be found on our web pages at: www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-complaints-and-compliments

If a resident is not satisfied with the services of the Council, they should initially raise a complaint with us. All social housing landlords have a responsibility to deliver a quality service to their residents and must have a complaints process that is easy to use, fair and designed to put things right.



It is advised that residents first exhaust the Council's corporate complaints procedure, but if a resident is unhappy with the way we have dealt with their complaint, they can refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

Residents can:

Fill out the online form: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/

Call **0300 111 3000** during working hours
For more information on the Housing Ombudsman:
www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/

For more information on the Regulator of Social Housing: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing

The Housing Ombudsman has a Complaint Handling Code which the Council is obligated to follow. You can see how we measure up against the Code in our self-assessment published on our webpages at:
www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-complaints-and-compliments

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

What are tenants satisfaction measures?

All social housing providers (i.e. Councils and Housing Associations) in England must collect data on a new set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) to be reported to Tenants and to the Regulator of Social Housing for 2023/24.

The measures form part of a new system developed by the Regulator to assess how well social housing landlords are doing at providing good quality homes and services.

How does this affect you as a tenant?

The measures are aimed at helping improve standards for people living in social housing, by:

- Providing a visible way for tenants to see how well their landlord is doing, and enabling tenants to hold their landlord to account.
- providing the regulator an insight into which landlords might need to improve things for their tenants.

How the Regulator will measure landlords' performance

TSMs are designed to see how well landlords are performing in terms of:

- keeping properties in a good state of repair
- maintaining building safety
- respectful and helpful engagement
- effective handling of complaints
- responsible neighbourhood management.

There are 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures in total which include:

- 12 Tenant Perception Measures
- 10 Management Information measures.

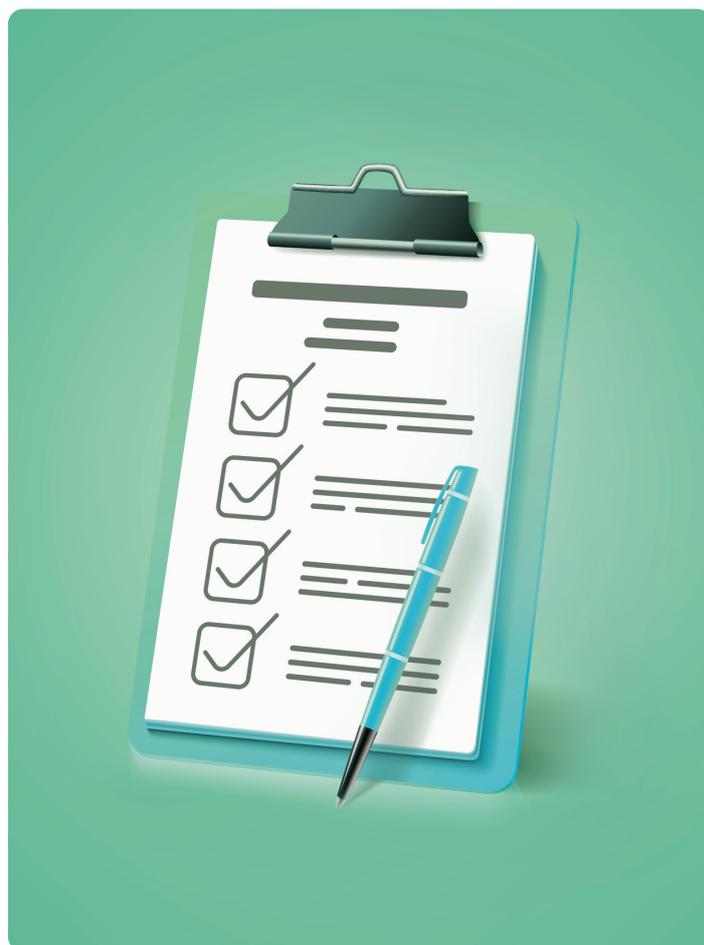
For tenant perception measures, landlords are required to survey a sample representative of their customer population. In summer this year we undertook our first TSM perception survey, with around one third of tenants receiving a survey and a total of 564 households completing it. This met all the statistical requirements of the survey and we are able to take the results as representative of our tenant population. A summary of the results is presented below.

Summary

Just over three quarters (76%) of tenants are satisfied overall with the services provided by Cannock Chase Council. Approximately one in ten (12%) of tenants expressed dissatisfaction, with less than 5% being very dissatisfied.

Areas of strength are the provision of homes that are well maintained and safe (74% and 81% respectively), however, engagement with tenants, measured by tenant perceptions that they are listened to (58%) and kept informed (65%) are areas of weakness.

A particular area for improvement is complaints handling, where only 41% of residents express satisfaction, this however, is in line with other comparable local authorities, suggesting this is an area where tenants tend to be more dissatisfied in general - however we know we need to improve in this area.



A detailed report will be made available on our website at www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/residents/housing/tenant-participation and a dashboard of indicators created in due course to present the information more clearly.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (continued)

Overall Satisfaction

TP01: Overall satisfaction.....76.4%

Keeping properties in good repair

TP02: Satisfaction with repairs.....75.6%

TP03: Satisfaction with the time taken to complete repair.....72.3%

TP04: Satisfaction that the home is well maintained.....73.7%

Maintaining Building safety

TP05: Satisfaction that the home is safe*.....80.6%

Respectful and engagement

TP06: Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them*.....58.4%

TP07: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed*.....65.3%

TP08: Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect*.....75.5%

Effective handling of complaints

TP09: Satisfaction that the landlords approach to handling complaints.....41.5%

Responsible neighbourhood management

TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained.....64.4%

TP11: Landlord makes a positive contribution to neighborhood's*.....54.4%

TP12: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling ASB*.....53.4%

*'Don't know' answers excluded from analysis.

Support for our customers

The Housing Services Team work hard to provide support for our customers, particularly the most vulnerable.

During 2022/23 we experienced a cost of living crisis, with the price of energy a particular worry for many.

We will provide as much support as we can to help our customers through these uncertain times. If there are concerns about your tenancy or keeping up with payments, our customers can contact us by:



Telephone **01543 462621**



Online www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/residents/housing



Email incomemanagementteam@cannockchasedc.gov.uk
or EMTeam@cannockchasedc.gov.uk



Help with the cost of living crisis

The rising cost of living is affecting us all. We are supporting residents, as well as signposting to other agencies which can offer help and advice.

For more information see our dedicated webpages at: www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/costofliving

There will also be information distributed on our social media platforms: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube; and via the [Chase Matters magazine](#).

A special edition of the Tenants' Newsletter was published in early 2023 that provided further information on the cost of living, the help available to tenants and leaseholders and tips on how they can make a few savings to ease rising costs.

If you need any help or advice our website has information to help during this difficult time.



Help for Households

www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/costofliving

Repairs and improving your home

Repairs during 2022/23

12,494 repair jobs were completed around the same number as last year.



9,635 repairs appointments were made

9,607 repairs appointment were kept **97.9%**.

We completed all repair jobs in **12.42 calendar days** on average over 2 days quicker than the previous year, when we were catching up on a backlog from the pandemic.

All non-emergency repairs were completed in an average of **12.17 working days** again, much quicker than the previous year, 2 days quicker.

100% of emergency repairs were completed within 24 hours improved on last year, where one job was unfortunately not completed.

The total cost of maintenance and repairs during 2022/23 was **£6.66m**

During 2022/23 we continued our monthly repairs satisfaction surveys sent to a random selection of tenants who had required a repair job to be completed during the previous month. We have found that:



90% were satisfied with the quality of the work slight decrease on last year (-2%).

88% were satisfied the repair was done right first time slight decrease on last year (-1%).

89% were satisfied overall with the service they received slight decrease on last year (-2%).

We know our performance in turning around void properties has improved, but we want to drive down the time it takes to relet properties further. We've made changes and are continuing to implement our Improvement Plan that includes a number of actions that we know will speed up the process for repairing and re-letting our properties. Performance in 2023/24 is showing further signs of improvement.

Average re-let time:
76.88 days
(102.37 days last year)

100% of our homes meet the decent homes standard (excluding where tenants have refused remedial work).



The decrease in relet times has meant the rent loss decreased significantly on last year, down from **£359k**.

We lost **£286k** in rent whilst properties were being repaired and let during the year.

Improving our homes



586 properties received electric upgrading works (wired in smoke detectors and provision of additional sockets) increase on last year (450)



120 properties benefitted from disabled facilities work (safe WC and showering, alterations to rooms; heating and power improvements; safety related works) decrease on last year (155)



267 properties benefitted from a central heating upgrade decrease on last year (415)



150 properties had bathroom upgrades increase on last year (57). **37** properties had kitchen upgrades increase on last year (0).

These capital programme improvements cost **£3.54m**

Disrepair Claims

There were 17 disrepair claims brought to the Council during 2022/23 and these do take up a lot of time and money. 15 of the 17 were resolved and 2 have rolled over into 2023/24. Of the 15 resolved cases, 11 were proven and cost the service over £65,000 this prevented 12 new kitchens being upgraded for other tenants, as well as a lot of officer time that could be better spent on other projects.



Repairs can be resolved much quicker this way and the cost of involving law firms means that the money you pay in rent is directly being paid to these firms for repairs that would have been completed if they were reported anyway. It also means other repairs and improvement work cannot be completed as the time and money is spent on dealing with disrepair claims.



In these cases, for most tenants involved, the claim only slows the repairs process down. We believe that some of these solicitors and law firms may advise tenants to refuse access for repairs, which delays the repair being completed and could cost tenants money. In many cases, tenants may be liable to pay court costs even on a no-win no fee basis.

If you are dissatisfied with any housing or repairs service you have received, or feel that you are entitled to compensation, there are a number of options available to you, both informal and formal. Our complaint procedure allows tenants to raise concerns and request that the service 'makes it right'. Tenants can log complaints by phone, in writing, by email or through the website at www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-council/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right



If you have any outstanding repairs then in the first instance it is essential you call **01543 462621** to report these to the Housing Maintenance service who will raise the repair and get you booked in.

More information is available at: www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-complaints-and-compliments

Damp and mould

Housing Maintenance have now introduced a dedicated Damp and Mould team, which has been set up to deal specifically with damp and mould issues within our properties.



If tenants believe there is damp and mould present within their home they can contact the team by calling **01543 462621** to book an inspection.

- 1 During the inspection our customers are given advice and guidance on the following: Types of dampness, condensation and mould growth, steps to reduce condensation and black mould, common household moisture producing activities and property ventilation.
- 2 A complete property survey is completed which considers the property type, insulation depth and type, glazing type, build type, external door type, and heating type.
- 3 Once the survey has been completed any remedial repairs are raised and scheduled with the customer, this may include Additional loft insulation, chemical treatment and decorative finish applied to any affected areas, installation of air vents, or installation of a Passive Input Ventilation System into the property to introduce fresh, filtered air into the dwelling at a continuous rate, encouraging movement of air from inside to outside.
- 4 Once the survey has been completed the Damp and Mould Inspector will raise a follow up survey to ensure that the repairs and advice has been successful.

Managing your tenancy

Your Rent

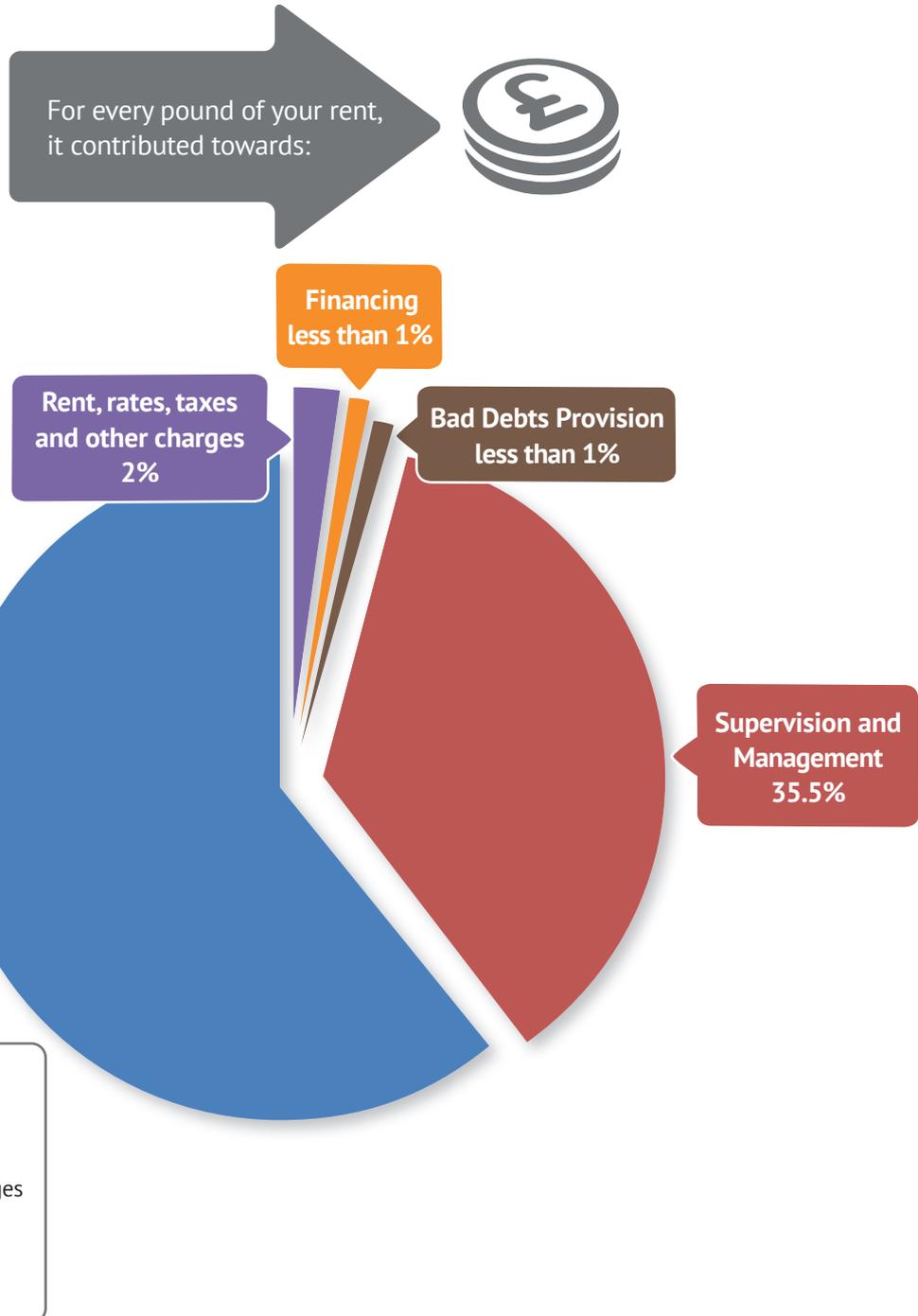
Following Government policy, we increased your rent by 4.1% in April 2022. The policy for rent increases is based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%. The CPI at the time of rent setting was 3.1%, hence the total 4.1% increase.



Your average rent in 2022-23 was £78.20 per week.



We received £20.24m in dwelling rent income during the year.



Current tenants were in arrears to the amount of **£297,138** at the end of the financial year. Those tenants in arrears were behind with their payments by an average **£282.81**, just under 4 weeks rent, which is about the same as last year. And some tenants are behind by a lot more. We evicted 3 households as a result of their rent arrears, an increase on the past couple of years but that was partly due to Covid-19 restrictions.

94% of tenants felt fairly or very satisfied with moving between Council properties, a slight decrease from the previous year but there were more lettings made during the year.



We recovered 15 abandoned properties

67 ASB cases were investigated, of which 55 were successfully resolved, 12 were closed due to disengagement or withdrawal, a decrease in cases on last year.



Lettings 2022/23



98% of tenancies granted in the last two years lasted for more than 1 year, which shows our proactive approach to tenancy sustainment.



210 tenants received a new tenancy visit.



180 introductory tenancies were sustained for 12 months.

We let 347 properties in total during 2022/23:



213 lettings were made to new tenants to social housing



106 lettings were to existing social housing tenants



28 mutual exchanges were completed

Tenancy Sustainment

The Service takes a multi-agency approach by creating a sustainability plan to focus on tenants who have required assistance with the cost of running their home. This has included sign posting to various Services and voluntary agencies. This approach has proved very successful.



During 2022/23 Tenancy Sustainment Officers have assisted 68 tenants in hardship to sustain their tenancies.



Resident Involvement

Over the past year, there have been several community engagement events across the District.

The events were held in Hednesford during April 2022, Cannock in May 2022 and June 2022; and 3 events were held in Rugeley during May 2022, November 2022, March 2023.

Resident involvement is about working with our tenants and residents to support and address those issues they feel are a priority in their local community. Housing Officers have been working with voluntary agencies and Community partners to develop and deliver these events.



Pye Green Community Centre

Housing Officers have worked in partnership with the Rugeley Community Centre and Foodbank to assist those tenants who are struggling financially in terms of the cost of living crisis.

This partnership approach has created an opportunity to assist people who are in financial hardship and who feel isolated and require specific support.

Housing Officers have assisted over 60 tenants who have engaged with the Services provided and further work is on-going with those volunteers involved.

Tenants & Residents Associations are also active on the Springfields estate in Rugeley and Moss Road estate in Chadsmoor, Cannock.

Housing Stock - Building New Council Homes / RTBs

Following on from the successful development at Hawks Green Depot in 2021/22, the Council remains committed to building new council homes for rent. They will reflect the Council's commitment to the Climate Change agenda with the construction of sustainable, low energy homes. The Council are currently working with a development partner to progress the submission of a full planning application for 58 homes on the former Aelfgar school site in Rugeley. 29 of these properties will be Council houses for rent.



Looking forward to 2023/24

We will continue improving and maintaining the quality of our housing stock beyond the Decent Homes Standard, with kitchen and bathroom replacements programmes alongside external envelope and environmental improvements.

We will continue to work to drive down the turnaround times of our empty homes (voids) to reduce our lost rental income, reduce the time incoming tenants have to wait for a property to be ready, whilst continuing to deliver a safe, clean, tidy home that is decent and conforms to our lettable standard.

We will also continue to support independent living, and alongside our cyclical maintenance and improvement works we will continue to undertake minor and major adaptations to improve properties for people with mobility and other health issues, which make it difficult for them to access the facilities within their home.

With the Social Housing (Regulation) Act coming into force in summer 2023 we will ensure we are compliant with the Social Housing Regulator's updated Consumer Standards so that we improve the standards of social housing, making sure tenants get quality accommodation, have choice and protection, and can hold us to account.

We look forward to receiving detailed results and analysis of our 2023 Satisfaction Survey of Tenants and Leaseholders, seeing what you think of the services we deliver and, most importantly, how we can improve our offer to all our tenants and leaseholders.

Nirmal Samrai

Head of Housing and Corporate Assets

In 2023/24 your rent has been increased by 7% in accordance with Government's rent policy, so average rents per week in 2023/24 will be approximately:



1 bed =
£75.99



2 bed =
£86.80



3 bed =
£91.00



4 bed =
£101.20

Housing Revenue Account Budget 2023/24

£21.95m

£21.86m

HRA Income
2023/24

HRA Expenditure
2023/24

HRA Capital Programme 2023/24 Priorities

Replacement of Kitchens	£1,660,000
Replacement of Bathrooms	£1,568,000
Disabled Facilities Work	£1,114,000
Replacement of Central Heating	£966,000
Upgrading of Electrics	£692,000
Communal Door Entry System	£170,000
Fire Safety Works inc. Communal Blocks	£800,000
Sheltered Schemes improvement works, lift replacements and door entry	£350,000
Electrical Inspection Condition Report	£227,000
External / Environmental Works	£146,000
Other Costs and Contingencies	£168,000
Total	£7,861,000



Keep in touch...

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